

The Address—Mr. Allmand

Government. Our Party has taken the position that we should work toward the removal of that notwithstanding clause.

There are very few specifics with respect to language rights and education. The Government indicated in the Speech from the Throne that it will introduce legislation to deal with language rights, but what is needed is further amendment to the Constitution with respect to language rights because the current provisions are inadequate. As a member of the joint committee of the House and Senate on language rights, I can tell you that many of those groups who came before us suggested amendments, including removing the words "where numbers warrant" with respect to minority language education, and other refinements.

We will wait to see what the legislation says with respect to language rights, but legislation is not enough. We need further initiative by the Government with respect to constitutional amendments. It is only in the Constitution that one can be assured that one's rights are protected and that those rights will not be amended away by a future Parliament or future government.

Another issue that I am deeply concerned about and which is only touched on lightly in the Speech from the Throne is the matter of aboriginal rights. The Government says that it looks forward to the next constitutional conference on aboriginal rights. However, it does not say much more than that. It simply says: "In co-operation with the provinces, my Government will exert every possible effort to bring these discussions to a successful conclusion". That is essentially all it has to say about aboriginal rights. There is not one word in the Speech from the Throne with respect to the Coolican report on native land claims. That is a very important report from a commission that was established by the Government. It has made no positive statement on that report and it remains in limbo. I must say that from the feedback I am getting, that report and the issues contained in it are the ones that are of greatest concern to aboriginal groups in this country.

At the constitutional meeting on self-government and aboriginal rights which is scheduled for next year, the Government must take note of the fact that the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, George Erasmus, has stated that he does not intend to attend further planning meetings for this constitutional conference unless the attitude of the Government changes. Again, the Government gives no indication in the Speech from the Throne that it will change its view with respect to the entrenchment of these native rights. It was reported that after the conference in Newfoundland, George Erasmus, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, stated that: "The constitutional process is going nowhere and until it is going somewhere we do not intend on participating. We will not give any credence to that process." The Government must deal with that but we have heard nothing so far with respect to these important issues.

Let me move on to the other so-called main plank in the Conservative agenda, which is economic renewal. Just two years ago the cry of the Conservative Government with respect

to economic matters and economic growth was the development of a comprehensive free trade agreement with the United States. The Conservatives described it as a comprehensive free trade agreement and the Americans described it in the same way. However, in the Speech from the Throne, as reported at page 12 of *Hansard* of October 1, the Government states:

Such pressures emphasize the importance of my government's pursuit of a mutually advantageous trade agreement with the United States.

What a backtracking operation. While no one in this country is opposed to a mutually advantageous trade agreement with the United States, that is completely different from a comprehensive trade agreement. Again, it is all part of the Conservative image politics and rhetoric rather than policies.

In addition to this new wording to describe what the Government is doing with the United States, we also see in the speech an emphasis not only on bilateral trade with the United States but on multilateral trade. When one puts that all together, it almost sounds like what the Liberal Party proposed in response to the Government's comprehensive free trade proposals two years ago. We said that we wanted to pursue a more advantageous trade arrangement with the United States, but we thought that it should be done in the context of multilateral trade agreements. This is again rhetoric with no substance.

● (1140)

The Government was going to give us a whole program on tax reform but it spent two years piling taxes on the middle and lower-income groups, giving \$500,000 exemptions to those with capital gains and bailing out the higher creditors with respect to the banks.

I see my time is just about up. One could go on for a long time tearing the Speech apart and I would be quite willing to do so. But in conclusion let me say that we delayed Parliament for one month to hear the Speech from the Throne, and I really believe the postponement happened so that we could have no Question Period before the two by-elections, the one which took place in St. Maurice and the one which took place in Edmonton. After waiting one month we hear a Speech from the Throne which—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

[*Translation*]

Order! I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member but his time has expired.

For questions and comments, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata).

[*English*]

Mr. Nunziata: My colleague indicated in his closing remarks that the Government decided in early September to prorogue Parliament for the stated purpose of preparing a Speech from the Throne. Now we have the benefit of the Speech from the Throne, which took some 30 days or 40 days to prepare. Presumably the Government was thinking about